

PALESTINE AND THE WAR

am-
Near East
Palestine

IMPRESSIONS ON A RELIEF TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND

(With photographs by the author)

By Maurice Wertheim

ON a brilliant morning of last September, just as the sun distinctly outlined the rolling hills of Judaea behind the little port of Jaffa, the United States armored cruiser *North Carolina* surprised Palestine. Not ten-inch guns but the ship's band, striking out in the "Star Spangled Banner," carried the message of America to the Holy Land. The officers stood with uncovered heads on the quarter-deck, and as I joined them in as near an attitude of naval salute as a civilian could muster, I was proud, prouder of our country, and more inspired by the hymn than I had ever been before. For here was a United States battleship carrying to Jews who had sought refuge from all over the world, relief in their hour of need from their American brethren—a noble, stirring example of the freedom and sympathy of America.

I had been marooned by the war while on a visit to Constantinople. The Dardanelles were closed, so that there was nothing for it but to await developments in idleness. But to be idle at such a time, when misery was spreading like flame about us, would have palled upon anyone, so that I gladly accepted the opportunity growing out of the piteous appeal for assistance which reached Ambassador Morgenthau early in September, from Jewish leaders in Palestine.

The war had closed their usual channels of assistance and so damaged their trade that the very existence of the Jews in Palestine was threatened. A cable was dispatched by the Ambassador to Jacob H. Schiff, and in little more than forty-eight hours, a reply came from Louis Marshall, acting for the American Jewish committee, with a subscription of \$50,000 for the purposes required! All honor to Schiff, Straus, Marshall, and the other contributors and organizers of the fund, who, in giving quickly, gave twice.

But anyone who knows Turkey, and particularly Turkey in time of war, when gold is scarce and almost impossi-

SINCE the outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and England, the situation of the Jewish people of Palestine has become, if anything, more precarious than ever. Not the least of the achievements of the Jewish colonists in Palestine will be reckoned the initiative and leadership they have shared with their coreligionists in this emergency.

Mr. Wertheim's mission was one of relief; he found not only pressing need, but an agricultural

AN OLD JEWISH
WATCHMAKER, WELL-
TO-DO BEFORE WAR, NOW
REDUCED TO PENURY



ble of transfer when had, knows that for the Ambassador at Constantinople only part of the problem was solved when the money was subscribed in America. In quick succession, however, he overcame the difficulties. Through the courtesy of the Standard Oil Company, he was able to have gold paid to him by their agents in Constantinople against the fund, which was paid to their office in New York. Another cable to the department of state brought the permission to have his agent take the money to Jaffa (the port of Jerusalem) on board the *North Carolina*, which was then headed for Syria and Palestine with consular relief.

On a few hours' notice I was selected for the mission, put aboard the *North Carolina* at the mouth of the Dardanelles, with numberless suspicious-looking sacks and an envelope full of passports. Otherwise my outfit consisted of some hastily packed books on Palestine, my six-shooter and a heavy sense of re-

sponsibility,—for it was my duty to take the money to all the principal points in Palestine and arrange for its distribution when I had it there. In a country almost without railroads and noted for the dissension among its communities, neither task appeared very easy.

Small wonder then, that, on arrival at Jaffa, when the band ceased playing our national anthem and I was well away toward shore with the heavy sacks buoyed in the tender, I looked with regret upon the receding cruiser and her American flag.

The first glimpse of the quay did not encourage me much. It swarmed with *fezzes* and turbans and dark, excited humanity. Turks, Arabs, and Jews had huddled themselves into unnatural proximity, occupying every square inch of space, so that it seemed as if another comer would surely mean a man in the water. I was glad to find on shore that Dr. Ruppin, one of Palestine's leading Jews, who had been delegated to meet

movement which must
transcend even the
horrors of a war

me, had wisely prepared a carriage outside the quay; so that with a flying wedge of Jack Tars, we were able to get the bags safely to the carriage and then to the bank vaults.

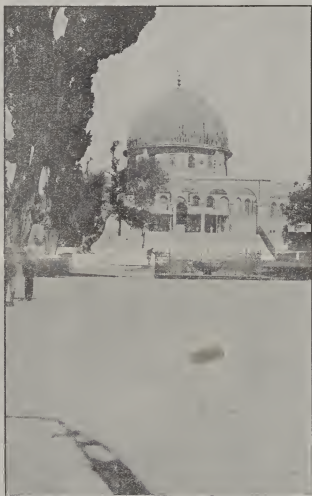
To understand why it was that relief work was sent first to the Jews of Palestine rather than to the Jews of other countries also affected by the war, requires acquaintance with the present Jewish population of that country. Roughly speaking, there are in Palestine about 100,000 Jews, about 85,000 of whom are located in the five main cities

Spanish, are industrious and self-supporting; the latter, as Ashkenazim, spoke the language of their varied origin, and, from the nature of their immigration, rely largely for support upon contributions from their families at home and from religious Jews all over the world.

The more interesting population, however, is that of the colonies, a product of thirty-five years, which, taken together, now reaches the respectable total of 15,000. These are almost exclusively Jews from the Diaspora—that is to say,

and have come of their own accord. Lastly, there are in Palestine, as if to emphasize the wandering character of the race, some few thousand Jews from Morocco, Bokhara, and the district of southern Arabia, known as Yemen. They are miserably poor and, except for the ever-present side curls, irreconcilable as Jews.

Thus it will be seen that the present Jewish population in Palestine is by no mean indigenous. Paradoxically enough, in spite of the glorious association of the land with the ancient history of the



MASQUE OF OMAR

The shrine of the Moslems, who make up four-fifths of the resident population in Palestine.



GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The Christian sects in Jerusalem are largely there for religious purposes. The people are few in number.

of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Saffed, and Tiberias. The remainder are scattered about in separate little agricultural communities known as "Jewish colonies."

Of the Jewish population of the cities, about one-third are older settlers who took refuge there generations ago because of oppression in Spain. Two-thirds are newer arrivals of the last forty years, drawn from all over the world—some because of persecution, but most because of a devout wish to spend their last days in the Holy City. The former, known as Sephardim, spoke

Poland, Russia, Galicia and Roumania, where the lot of the Jews is the worst on earth—who have fled to Palestine from pogroms and persecution. Their arrival was largely made possible by the far-seeing philanthropy of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of Paris, who acquired large tracts of land in Palestine and offered it to the refugees on minute instalments with little or no interest.

Agricultural colonization has also been assisted by the Zionist organizations; and there are, too, groups of colonists who have made their own arrangements

Jewish race, the Arabs now there consider the Jews as foreigners, and have some cause to do so, outnumbering them as they do, four to one. It is, nevertheless, the ancient association which has drawn the present Jew there. To those who suffered persecution, it is home; to those who are deeply religious, it is holy. But whether it be of one class or another, the presence of all is due to reasons religious or racial, and as it is difficult for immigrants of this order to gain a foothold in a new country, it is natural that Jews throughout the world

should consider them a special charge and send them relief first in times of stress.

With the fund safely stowed away in the bank as "closed dépôt," I entered upon my second duty—to observe. The American givers had particularly requested personal supervision over the distribution of the fund; so that before even considering relief measures, it was necessary for me to get as complete a picture of the country and as thorough an understanding of its Jews, and the various Palestinian movements as I

The horrors of a ritual murder trial and of Russian pogrons flashed through my mind as I looked on the bent man, and I knew then, even better, why relief had been sent to Palestine.

In arranging for my "seeing" trip, my Americanism did not desert me. There was only one automobile in Palestine, a little, two-cylindred, old-fashioned affair, but as it would take me quicker, I hired it. Parts of the trip I made, had been made before in an automobile, but as far as I am able to learn, I am the first man to have covered the entire

edge of this that my car protested. Had it been human I should not have blamed it, as my companion—Mr. Aaronsohn—told me it was the worst place in Palestine for Bedouins and robbers. I was carrying \$5,000 in gold, which I wrapped in my coat and propped as a pillow under one of those ancient, gnarled, broad-branching olive trees which are the monuments of the interior of Palestine. Two hours of sleep was all that I had had in the forty-eight previous, so that I was willing to wait for something to happen. It eventually did, in the shape



TIBERIAS

One of the cities to which American relief was brought in September.



THE DAMASCUS GATE IN JERUSALEM

Reminiscent of the days of the Crusades, when the East and the West were once before at war.

could in a short time.

On the threshold of my task—that is, even before I had left the bank—my interest was aroused to enthusiasm. On a bench in a corner, evidently waiting to draw some money, sat a Russian Jew, dark, spectacled, and patient. He was smoking a cigarette—I don't know why I should particularly remember the cigarette, except that it seemed he was not quite used to it. His high forehead and the deep furrows of his face compelled me to ask who he was.

Mendel Beiliss!

country in a car. Don't think I am proud of it; anyone would shudder at flying past well-remembered Biblical names. But it was done to get me to my work quicker—and then, the car didn't exactly "fly." Once it refused even to crawl, and, as always happens, it was at the most unfortunate time and in the most unfortunate place.

I was on my way from Jerusalem to a Jewish colony in the interior, called Zichron-Jacob, to reach which one had to traverse a bare, deserted plain, twenty-five miles across. It was on the

of a mule and four Arabs, who distributed themselves variously—one on the hood of the recalcitrant machine, one on the back of its equally recalcitrant savior, and the others in uncomfortable positions in the motor.

After five miles of pulling, stopping and kicking—mostly the latter two—our good mule jolted us into the Arab town of Tulkarem, a metropolis of about seventy-five souls where, as usual, "for the first time in ten years," I was assured, no carriage was to be had. As darkness came on, I had visions of a

night under the olive tree, and besides, grew hungrier as it grew darker. At an Arab café we had some sour cream, some dough that only faintly resembled bread, and some meat-balls, and when we were through, evidently as an afterthought, we were given forks.

Finally there arrived a conveyance something like our prairie wagons, and we began our long night drive with revolvers loaded and cocked. Toward midnight I was sharply awakened from a drowse by the report of a gun. I saw my driver crumple up under the covers, and I felt myself all over to see if I were wounded, never having had any past experience to tell how it would feel. However, it did not turn out to be a tragedy. The commotion had been caused by some frightened Turks in the one other wagon on the same route, who were firing their guns to prove to possible robbers that they were armed. The shots continued until 2 a. m. when we gladly pulled up at the sleeping colony.

The Relief Problem

Generally speaking, I found that the war had necessitated relief in Palestine for three main reasons: first, it had cut off, as with the stroke of an axe, the demand for Palestinian products; second, it had interrupted the ordinary means of communication on which Palestine is dependent for its food supply; and third, as far as the Jewish people were concerned, it had cut off the usual sources of revenue. Other than its export of oranges, almonds and wine, Palestine depends industrially upon souvenirs and antiquities purchased by the tourists. In times like these, that industry, of course, is the first to suffer, and naturally prices of agricultural products that are articles of semi-luxury, are also greatly affected.

Consequently when I arrived at Palestine I found unemployment general, and it was with that problem that I had largely to deal. No money, no goods, hardly any news entered the country; the source of all the food supply hung by the slight thread of one or two lines of ships which were still running. It seemed to me like a land dazed and limp utterly overcome by the situation in which it found itself. Typical of this condition were the orange groves of the Judaean colonies. I saw wide, blooming fields of fruit which I was told would be allowed to rot, because the oranges could not be sold for the money it would cost to get them to the markets.

Let it be said, however, to the credit of the colonists and of all the wealthier Jewish population of Palestine, that they did all in their power to furnish labor to their employes, even when they would have profited by stopping work.

Of course the case was not so extremely bad in the colonies, as there, at least, people were able largely to feed themselves. Their greatest difficulty lay in unemployment, since with cutting off the markets it would soon prove im-

possible for employers, even with the best of intentions, to continue to employ their laborers. And when you consider that the labor element in the colonies is largely composed of penniless Jews who had migrated there for just that work, you will understand that it was no light problem.

In the cities, and in Jerusalem in particular, there was no work, there was no money—there was no hope of relief. It is only necessary to realize that nine-tenths, if not more, of the activities of Jerusalem are supported by foreign cap-



YEMENITE CHILDREN IN A PALESTINE COLONY

They are from southern Arabia, and except for the ever-present side curls are irrecognizable as Jews.

tal, to understand the demoralization that confronted them. Hospitals, asylums, schools, homes for the aged and insane, had no means of continuing, and some had already closed when I arrived. Many individuals, too, were in the same position as the hospitals, since they also lived on foreign remittances, the only difference being that they could not close their doors and be done with it.

At the time of my visit the pinch was just beginning to be felt in earnest, and naturally it was in the poorer Jewish quarters—the Moroccan and Yemenite, that I saw its first real effects. Gaunt frames of the sick and starving were lying tier on tier on bunks or on the filthy earthen floors of little black holes that could not be called rooms. Piteously they held out their hands for food and I shuddered to think how the same misery might spread among those less accustomed to bear it.

With such a large problem before me, I realized that the sum I had with me would have to be carefully husbanded to be effective. It is interesting to know that from all sides of Palestine I received requests that the fund be used in as productive a manner as possible. Yet at every moment it became increasingly difficult to heed these counsels of common-sense and not distribute immediately food and money to all those I saw in need of both.

I remember an incident which oc-

curred one day in the offices of the American Consulate, which were put at my disposal by our consul at Jerusalem, Dr. Glazebrook, whose efforts to relieve the situation have been untiring. I was in the inner office endeavoring by five-minute appointments to see all of the crowd of a hundred or more who had swarmed to the Consulate to give me advice or to tell me their troubles. The people were crowded in the vestibule outside, when I suddenly heard cries and a commotion. I threw open the door just in time to see the dragoman grasp a knife from the hand of a man for whom I evidently was the last hope; for when told he could not see me that day, he tried to take his life.

Loans on Labor

The final plan of relief took several forms which varied in the different communities. Our governing committee was composed of delegates from the various sections, who in turn had local committees under them. The fund was divided in proportion to population, and in all sections the guiding plan was to supply only food necessities and no money,—and then mainly, except in the case of the helpless, to those who were willing to work for it. Having established soup kitchens for those unable to work, we arranged to buy large quantities of food that was to be sold at cost or less in scattered stores, and with these we worked out a loan institution which was to "loan on labor," and was intended as far as possible to counteract unemployment. Employers who were unable to continue their men at work were told we would pay their workmen in tickets on our stores, and that we would accept repayment when times were better. This meant sufficient support for a man willing to work, and less wage cost, and credit as well, for employers who had neither money nor business in sight. Where men could not be continued in their regular occupations we endeavored to have them employed on public works, as in Jerusalem on the very necessary canalization of the city, or as in the colonies on the much-needed roads and pavements.

With Turkey at War

A worse food scarcity than I saw must have developed in Palestine since November, with Turkey and England at war. For this war means that English and French ships must have stopped calling at Palestinian ports, leaving only the Italian line to prevent utter isolation. As Palestine has at the present time no railroads connecting it either with the north or south, the situation must become more terrible every day. To counteract it, various organizations are, I understand, continuing to send relief funds, without which disaster must certainly ensue. It may even be possible, however, that money will be of no value



THE OLD
Bedouin rider, snapped as he approached on the caravan trail.



THE NEW
Young Jewish farm laborer driving a Yankee cultivator.

since it cannot be eaten, and that relief may have to be supplemented by food ships—a situation which is also being carefully considered by the committees.

The most vital thing that could be done permanently to relieve the situation, would be to find new markets for the orange crop of Palestine. A half million dollars' worth of fruit will almost surely go to waste unless new markets can be found, and America is almost the only hope. This matter is now under consideration by the committees here and as the oranges are equal to, if not better than, the California fruit, I hope that the shipping obstacles will soon be surmounted; and that if so, Jew and Gentile alike will do their share to help the situation by demanding Jaffa oranges for breakfast.

Such co-operation will help prevent the collapse of the Palestine movement.

My trip through the Jewish colonies was the most inspiring part of my expedition. It is these colonies that form the nucleus and the hope of the Palestinian movement. It is in them that one sees the possibility of building up a new home for the Jewish race; and in their successful work, the practicability of a return of the Jew to the land.

There are about fifty colonies scattered all over the country, although the largest has only 2,000 inhabitants. In driving about one can always recognize them by the red roofs of their well-built houses, standing so conspicuously in contrast to the poor construction of the Arab buildings. There is no question but that the Jewish colonist has had a hard time in Palestine; but what he has done, he has done thoroughly and with an eye to the future. In fact, in Palestine today, people do not think in years but in generations—sons, if you like—always of the ultimate end which they realize is remote, but for which they are willing to work as long as the

BELOW is shown a picture which puts the charge from the pastoral to the farming stage of civilization quite as graphically. The stream divides Arab pastures from Jewish tilled land. The reeds at the left half conceal the outlines of a modern water plant erected by a Jewish colony.

breath of life is in them. They are living to make a dream come true.

The farmer Jews

The impression I took away from my visit was that in their short life in Palestine these colonists are demonstrating three main things—that the Jew, universally supposed to be a constitutionally commercial being, is as well adapt-

ed to farming as any other man; that Palestine is a land of opportunity; and that it is a happy place for Jews to be.

It is clear enough when one stops to think, that the commercial talents and trading instincts of the Jew grew out of the circumstances of ages; and yet the old superstition hangs on. Even Jews themselves enter gingerly upon any agricultural enterprise for their race, but the record of the Palestine colonists now stands out as a fact, as an actuality, against this strange, self-conscious dread. The record is so much more remarkable as the successful colonists are of the same generation, and some of them the same men who before their emigration were tailors and storekeepers in the Diaspora. There are many in Palestine today who, having come as young men without a sou, are now worth 100,000 francs and over, and possess extensive orange groves and vineyards. I remember one man in particular who told me that he started thirty years ago with a small loan from Baron Rothschild, that he now owns sixty acres of fine orange groves and is worth 125,000 francs, and "would not change with a king."

But not only have the colonists built this up with their own labor, but they have built up their constitutions as well. It was a revelation to me to see broad-chested men in flannel shirts and riding boots, whose ruddy countenances and strong arms showed no trace of Ghetto and Pale, and made them look for all the world like our western ranchers. No longer is the "wailing wall" typical of the Jews in Palestine, and it is this change which is the best augury for the future. The appearance of the new generation in the colonies bears it out; for they are fine, free-looking young men and women, treading with a springing step, and singing at their work. Combining as they do this new vigor with





THE UNITED STATES CRUISER, NORTH CAROLINA, WHICH BROUGHT THE RELIEF EXPEDITION FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO JAFFA.



THE START FROM JERUSALEM FOR THE INTERIOR IN THE ONLY MOTOR-CAR IN PALESTINE. AARON ARONSOHN SEATED.



THE DOCK AT TIBERIAS, AS MR. WERTHEIM LEFT ON THE RETURN TRIP. IN THE FOREGROUND IS SEEN A TYPE OF THE THIRD MEANS OF TRAVEL.

their innate cleverness, there are big opportunities open to them and they are beginning to realize them.

Take, for example, Rishon-Le-Zion, the great wine colony of Palestine, where the famous Carmel wine is produced. I was met by its three leaders, prosperous landowners, whom no one would have guessed to have been, thirty years ago, penniless refugees from Russian persecution. I saw vineyards kept like gardens and eucalyptus trees that had in less than a generation reclaimed a bare plain and made shaded walks as beautiful as any I have seen in royal parks. With proper pride they showed me through their cellars, which are not only the largest in the world, but also the best appointed. Imagine seeing in Palestine, cellars that rival if not supersede any in the famous wine-growing districts of France!

Idealism of the Soil

But my chief pleasure lay not so much in seeing these marvels as in watching the light in their eyes as they pointed with glowing satisfaction to their modern machinery and new improvements—their electric plant, for example, “the only one in Palestine!”

And they played a trick on me, too, for they showed me with a pretense at pride an old type engine which I thought pretty good; but no, that was too antiquated for them, and was now in the scrap-heap, having been replaced across the way by a “real” engine of the most modern type, at which my surprise was too genuine not to please them.

It is true that hitherto most of the successful Jewish colonies have been engaged in fruit farming of one kind or another, and that most of them are still so engaged. This is due to the special adaptability of the soil to fruit raising and also to the fact that with the cautious tread of beginners the Jews have first entered this less arduous form of agriculture. There is, however, no doubt that with continued physical improvement and continued scientific advance, they will succeed as well in cereal growing. This is the more particularly true as they have in their midst, devoting his whole life and work to them, the celebrated agronomist, Aaron Aronsohn, who is known wherever the science of agronomy is studied and whom many universities in vain have endeavored to attract.

An American Leader

First and foremost, Aronsohn is a Jew, and no lure of wealth or power could draw him from Palestine and from his one great purpose—to help his brethren master the soil. Today he heads the Jewish Agricultural Experiment Station at Haifa—supported, by the way, entirely by American Jews, and one of the most advanced institutions of its kind in the world. Daily he is solving

for the Jews some new problem, helping not alone those who are there, but encouraging those in darkest Russia to come and return to the land. For Aaronsohn is no local figure. Even the veriest layman in farming has heard of "wild wheat," one of his discoveries which may even revolutionize our own wheat growing industry in America, and make our vast arid belt available for wheat cultivation. From all over the world the advice and learning of this Palestine Jew are sought, and I suspect he is proudest when a letter of inquiry comes from a Russian agricultural station.

Of course, I do not mean by this account to give the impression that Palestine is the old land of "milk and honey," and that a fortune awaits any man who goes there to farm. All the colonists have had a hard time and it is only by the hardest kind of work that success is attained. Yet the reward is there in the end and facts like this prove it. Furthermore, there is a reward that even the poorest and most struggling colonist has attained, and that is a spiritual reward which is apparent to anyone. They are happy.

I remember an old colonist—the oldest in Rishon—standing in front of his modest cottage, his great grey beard telling of at least eighty years, who reminded me gravely as follows: "You know, we did not come here to make money—Heaven knows I have not made much; but we came to be with our brothers, we came because this is the land of our ancestors, and this is the place we belong." The spirit of living for a cause is rife among them, and any man who works with his hands for himself as well as for a great ideal, is bound to be happy.

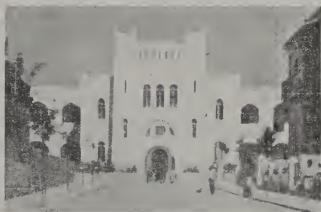
Furthermore, they are living a new life of liberty, untrammelled by the old restrictions or prejudices. They can be Jews; they can glory in their faith and their race and their traditions; and even if they have a hard time, a great weight is lifted from their hearts in being Jews and living Judaism without let or hindrance.

In one colony I saw at an engagement party the young men and women of the settlement dancing the merry swinging dance which they have adopted as their national dance, to the air of their national hymn which each one sang proudly, almost defiantly. In another colony, I was passing one Friday evening a long, low structure that looked like a barn, and saw sitting on the benches in front of it a number of bent old men with prayer books in their hands, talking earnestly in groups. In answer to my eager question, I was told that this was a temporary synagogue, and that the old men were recent refugees from Russian pogroms discussing the Talmud in the twilight hour before the Sabbath worship. I thought of their hunted life in the Pale and the differ-

THREE OF THE LEADING COLONISTS AT RISHON-LE-ZION—ONE OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS OF THE ZIONIST SETTLEMENTS.



GYMNASIUM IN TEL-A-VIR—A COMBINATION TOWN HALL AND RECREATION CENTER IN THE ONLY TRULY JEWISH CITY IN THE WORLD. THE COMMUNITY IS LOCATED NEAR JAFFA.



TEMPORARY SYNAGOGUE OF A GROUP OF RUSSIAN SETTLERS DRIVEN TO PALESTINE BY THE PROGRAMS. (PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN JUST BEFORE EVENING WORSHIP).



ence it must have meant to them—and became a Zionist on the spot.

That does not mean that I became an advocate of a Jewish state in Palestine, or that I wished to become a party to a movement that would drive all Jews, wherever living in the world, into Palestine as into a corral—which many laymen seriously think is the object of Zionism. It means merely that I sympathized, as almost anyone would, with the aims of those who are trying to establish in Palestine a center of refuge for oppressed or restricted Jews of all countries, a center that will preserve Judaism and will permanently radiate Jewish life and culture. It is a thousand pities that this simple and noble aim has become an "ism," developing pro's and anti's on a subject about which, among either Jew or Gentile, it seems to me that little difference of opinion can exist. If all Jews realized that this is Zionism on the ground, I hardly think that there would be so much theoretical and vexed discussion of the matter.

In organizing in Palestine a well-knit Jewish community the Zionists first encountered the difficulty of language. In the earlier part of this account I told how the Jewish population in Palestine had come from all countries, how the Sephardim spoke Spanish, and how the Ashkenazim spoke the language of their origin, whether they had been Polish, German or Russian. I used the past tense advisedly for they speak these languages no longer. Nor do they speak Yiddish, a language not far removed from a jargon, which is spoken differently in different countries.

Thirty years ago there arose in Palestine a man and a scholar who saw that there could be no real community life or community influence without a com-

mon language. He spoke of it but was not heard, he cried it from the house-tops in Jerusalem, but still was doubted. He is a very small man in stature, but he is big in purpose. To an incredulous community he announced that he would marry only such a woman as would agree that their children should speak a new language and nothing but a new language, from the cradle. He found such a woman and gradually won over other adherents. People laughed, yet in joint meetings on questions of general interest the new language was tried and found most convincing, since in no other way could people talk fluently to each other. In public announcements, in intercommunication of all kinds, it helped immensely, so that slowly but surely people came to be his enthusiastic followers. The man's name is Ben-Jehuda, and the language, Hebrew.

It is the same language as that of the Old Testament, brought up to date and fitted to express the changed life of the day. Today throughout Palestine, in the Jewish colonies and in Jewish communities of the cities as well, Hebrew is talked as a living language. Not only Jews talk it, but many Arabs as well have found it to their interest to learn it. This is truly a monument of which the Zionists may be proud,—a remarkable achievement when one considers that in the short space of thirty years a language which, for the purposes of ordinary conversation had been dead for almost 2,000 years, has been completely revived. With scientific precision a body of scholars, Ben-Jehuda at their head, have filled up the gap so well that today lectures are given in Hebrew even on technical and scientific subjects.

When I was in Jerusalem I visited the workshop of this same Ben-Jehuda, who

is still working on his ten-volume dictionary of modern Hebrew. Six big volumes have been completed and published; and so far, six wealthy Zionists have each had the privilege of defraying the cost of one volume. It seemed to me that this little nervous man was working too hard to finish his great work before time should force him to stop. When I entered, he showed me almost feverishly how he worked.

In a big bare room lined on one side with books from floor to ceiling stood a long table, groaning under fifty or more tremendous tomes, all open and heavily book-marked. In the corner stood a cabinet in which I judged, from the eager way he hurried me to it, was his particular treasure. It was filled with thousands of little cards, all carefully arranged in packages under the main heading of letters. Although he talked too fast for me to understand thoroughly, I gathered that each package represented one word, and each card a quotation, showing the manner in which that word had been employed in the Bible and by all other Hebrew authors as well, so that he might have plenty of authority for his interpretations.

I wondered no longer that this stupendous work was not finished, or that he was laboring with restless haste. About him, too, were young men with the same eager expression—fine, dark, Jewish types with wavy black hair, and eyes glistening with their great purpose, like disciples about a modern prophet.

I shall never forget, when I asked Ben-Jehuda what would happen to his work if he should die, how he answered me, simply, yet greatly, "I must live." I shall never forget it, because it translated the spirit of modern Palestine.



THE OLDEST COLONIST AT
RISHON-LE-ZION